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# WASHINGTON

BOARD OF TRADE

1899

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# WASHINGTON

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ITS DESIRABILITY AS A PLACE OF  
RESIDENCE

AND

THE OPPORTUNITIES IT AFFORDS  
FOR PROFITABLE INVESTMENT

PUBLISHED BY  
THE WASHINGTON BOARD OF TRADE

1899



L. of G.



A WASHINGTON HOME



A MONG the cities where commerce reigns and manufactures hold sway there is keen competition. There is only one National Capital. Though a score of communities scramble for such local distinction as may be extracted from the self-applied term "metropolis," there is only one center of government of the United States. By din and roar and rattle and smoke hundreds of towns deservedly achieve rank in the realm of industry. There is only one incomparable residence city in the United States. That is the city of Washington; the city that charms men and delights women at all seasons of the year.





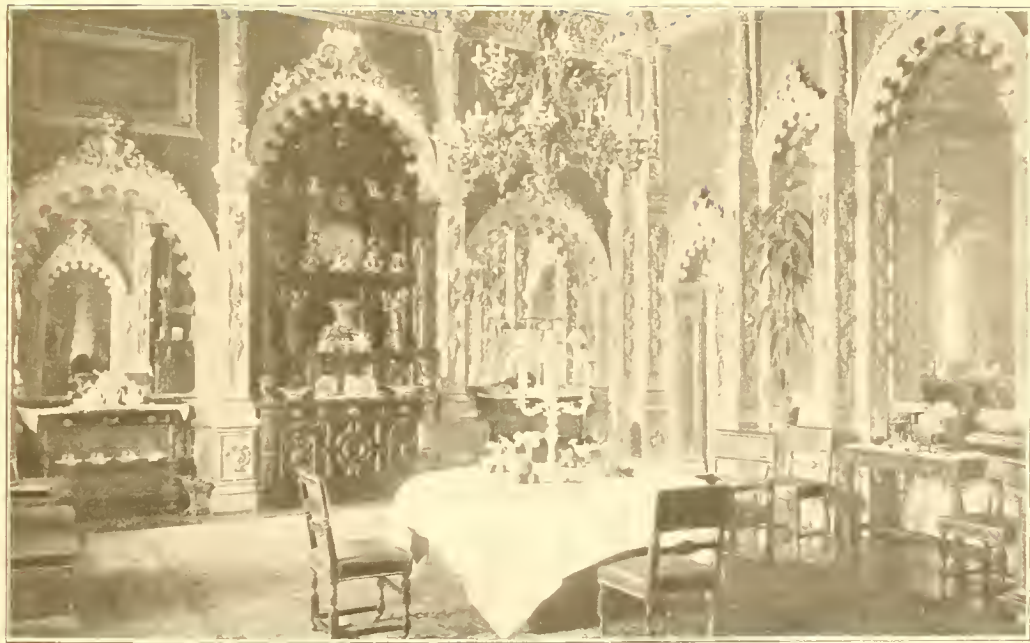
STATE WAR AND NAVY BUILDING





WASHINGTON'S GOVERNMENT is not of the so-called popular form, but it comes nearer to being popular with all the parties directly concerned than any other variety of municipal government operating in this country at this time. Three Commissioners are appointed by the President of the United States. These Commissioners—frequently termed the “triumvirate” by those who would prefer other Commissioners—frame estimates for the municipal sustenance of the District of Columbia, urge Congress to permit the District of Columbia to spend the money which the District raises through taxation, and then, when appropriations are made, see that they are properly disbursed. The Commissioners are generally men of prominence—one of them is required by **Government** the law to be an officer in the Corps of Engineers of the Army—and it is superfluous to add that they are scrupulously honest. As a consequence, all moneys are expended as the law directs and without the discounting intervention of a Board of Aldermen and a Common Council. The novelty of this condition must appeal strongly to persons who have resided in cities where taxpayers' contributions are regarded as legitimate spoils for the city's fathers and their friends. The idea that the people of the District of Columbia get a dollar's worth of material and work for a dollar must be extremely fascinating to the plucked American who has breathed the atmosphere of municipal care-





A DINING ROOM



lessness, not to say corruption. So it comes to pass that, even with insufficient appropriations, Washington is the most delightful of American cities because it is the best governed; because its municipal administration is un municipally business-like and completely devoid of dishonesty's taint.

One of the important things not generally understood by the public at large is the peculiar relationship existing between the General Government and the other tax-paying residents of the District of Columbia. That relation should be of interest to every American. There is an impression abroad in the land—frequently evident in Congress—“that Washingtonians are mendicants, dependent upon the national bounty, untaxed or lightly taxed, and draining, vampire-like, the life-blood of every Congressman's tax-burdened constituents.” If such an impression had any foundation in fact, Washington's growth would soon reach phenomenal proportions. The human desire to get as much as possible for nothing would give the District a population of more than a million within a decade. The truth is that Washingtonians pay their share of all bills and are not indebted in any way either to the General Government or to the component parts thereof which are located without the limits of the District of Columbia.





THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING ABOUT TO BE CONSTRUCTED





In June, 1783, Congress was in session at Philadelphia. Some of the Revolutionary soldiers had grievances, and they threateningly organized and marched toward the then seat of Government. Both the State and local authorities confessed themselves unable to control the invaders, so Congress fled precipitately. Thus was the necessity of a truly National Capital driven home, and as the result came the Constitutional provision which led to the cession of territory, ten miles square, by Maryland and Virginia—the District of Columbia—the site of what President Washington called the Federal City, which, in 1800, became the seat of Government.

In all the original city site there were 6,111 acres. The original owners donated to the United States for streets and alleys 3,606 acres, and 982 additional acres, divided into 10,136 building lots. The United States then purchased for its own uses 541 acres more, its total holding amounting then to 5,129 acres. All that the original owners received were 982 acres, sub-divided into 10,136 lots. It was provided that the 541 acres purchased for public building sites and reservations should be paid for out of the first proceeds of the lots donated to the Government. This was done; so the Government did not pay even one cent for the vast quantity of soil it owns in the District of Columbia.

Given to  
the  
Government





THE ARMY AND NAVY CLUB



In a recently published pamphlet on the "Finances of the National Capital Partnership," President Theodore W. Noyes, of the Board of Trade, sketches briefly the conditions which prevailed, from the initial agreements as to maintenance, until 1878.

"The original owners of Washington," says Mr. Noyes, "donated five-sevenths of the city's soil and yielded the right of self-government to the Nation on the understanding and implied agreement that the Nation was to build up here a magnificent capital, at its own expense, reimbursing itself in part from the proceeds of the sale of the donated lots. A pretentious city was planned, and lots were sold by the Government on the strength of this understanding. Patrick Henry complained that the residents of the District might, under the arrangement, 'enjoy exclusive emoluments to the great injury of the rest of the people,' and pamphlet protest was entered against Congress meeting all the needs of the capital, on the ground that the independence and self-respect of its citizens would be degraded. It was from the beginning, in theory at least, the city of the Nation, and not the city of its residents, and the primary responsibility for its development has always been in equity upon the Nation, and the residents, who have no voice in the disposition of the money exacted from them, are the incidental contributors.

The City  
of  
the Nation





THE NATIONAL MONEY-BANK





“In spite of this conceded relation of Nation and capital, the local tax-payers of the District for three-fourths of a century were compelled to assume practically the entire burden of capital-making, the Nation violating and neglecting the obligations which it had incurred. In 1878 the amount of the contributions of the resident tax-payers toward the expenses of the capital were fixed by law at one-half the total amount, the Nation tardily and inadequately fulfilling its original agreement.”

Investors contemplating the District of Columbia will probably be interested in the recent growth of improved real estate. The report of the Board of Assessors for the last fiscal year shows that the assessed value of new buildings erected during that period amounted to nearly two millions of dollars. The total tax assessment of the city of Washington, according to the Eleventh Census, was in excess of one hundred and twenty-three millions. Growth

Countless shade trees and scores of miles of broad asphalted streets would of themselves make Washington worthy a visit, but they are only two of the many items which go to make up the sum total of urban desirability. Scattered liberally throughout the length and breadth of the city are parks (officially known as government reservations). Some of these parks are merely grass-planted triangles, which contribute to the fascinating





CABIN JOHN BRIDGE



geometrical design which caused it to be said that "Washington was modeled after Versailles and Versailles from a spider's web." Others are great squares or circles where streets and avenues converge; a setting of emerald for choice plants and flowers, and frequently sites for statues of soldiers, sailors and statesmen. Still others cover extensive territory. Rock Creek Park contains more than eighteen hundred acres; the Zoological Park has nearly two hundred acres; the Mall stretches from the Capitol to the Potomac. By-and-by there will be another great park. For years man and Parks machinery have toiled to change the once-noisome and pestilential river-marshes into a pleasure ground, and the bulk of the work has been done. Inclosed within a strong sea-wall the old river-bed has been transformed into tree-growing soil until there is a vast expanse of high dry ground which in the near future will be placed in the keeping of landscape gardeners to the end that the public may be pleased, edified and physically bettered.

Suburban Washington is extremely beautiful. It is beautiful even when compared with the city. It abounds in feasts of landscape, in highland sites and woodland retreats, in superb drives, crystal streams, fine travel facilities and the best of good society. From the swift-flowing and disturbed Potomac on the west, over the hills and valleys of the





THE EXECUTIVE MANSION





north and east, around to the now broader and more majestic river on the south, there is a continuous chain of subdivisions within the links of which the new-comer may find enough of picturesque variety to puzzle him when he desires to make choice. Here is an attractive field for the investor. Washington's growth is no longer a matter of surmise.

Suburbs

Diversity of architecture is one of the reasons why Washington is such a desirable place of residence.

Years ago many cities became enamored of certain styles of architecture, and it seemed almost impossible for any considerable number of people to depart from the designs which pleased their fathers and grandfathers. There has never been any such formalism in Washington. No long rows of undistinguishable houses precisely alike in every external and internal detail, and monotonous at all times, destroy Washington's claim to municipal individuality. Architectural independence is the rule and it has worked admirably. Instead of wearisome lanes of red bricks, white doorsteps and green blinds are the esthetic products of modern brains and sympathetic hands. This quality is by no means confined to the great mansions; in fact, it is more common in the less pretentious homes. Household art is a notable Washington characteristic.

Architecture





ONE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL WORK-ROOMS



There can be no question as to the street railroad facilities of the Capital. Only a few years ago horses furnished the motive power. Then came cable on the lines of two companies. Now every road in the city either is or is about to be operated by underground electric current—the safest, the most modern, the most economical and the most satisfactory of all motor-devices yet applied to the problem of urban rapid transit. The deadly and disfiguring overhead wires and the unsightly and obstructive poles which are outrageously common in so many other cities do not exist in Washington; all the current being conveyed in conduits between and beneath the tracks. Car equipments are of the newest patterns, and cleanliness is the rule. Since all of the local roads, save one, have passed into the hands of a syndicate, which is now operating them in one system, the transfer facilities have so increased as to make possible very long rides for single fares; and single fares in Washington do not amount to as much as they generally do elsewhere. Instead of the nickel is the ticket; six of the tickets—good on all local roads—being procurable for twenty-five cents.

Rapid  
and Safe  
Transit.

Mention of overhead wires brings to mind the fact that Washington is singularly free from those nuisances. As a result of a steadily-urged crusade there is legislation which forbids the stringing of any additional wires on street poles, and compels the sub-





THE CORCORAN ART GALLERY





stitution of the conduit for the method common in less advanced communities. By-and-by all the telephone, telegraph and electric light wires will be safely stowed away underground, out of the way of the Fire Department, and beyond the reach of expensive atmospheric disturbances and the curious public with its tendency to handle "live" wires.

Some figures are confusing. Some are untruthful. Some are unattractive. The vital statistics of the National Capital are clear, accurate and gratifying. With a total population closely approximating three hundred thousand, in 1898 the white death-rate was 15.53 per thousand inhabitants, the number of that class being nearly two hundred thousand. The colored residents of the District of Columbia numbered then something like ninety thousand and their death-rate was 27.51. The whole death-rate was 19.32. Small as the rate is—swollen, however, by the much larger mortality of the ~~negro~~—it lessens steadily. Twenty-four years ago the white death-rate Health. was 19.54, while the colored mortality was represented by 40.78. Since that time medical science and education have wrought wonders; not spasmodically, but continuously and solidly. Shallow wells have been filled up, marshes drained and streets cleaned, water-supply increased, milk carefully inspected, food adulterations sought and located, surface drainage stopped and sanitation taught. Countless efforts to defend the





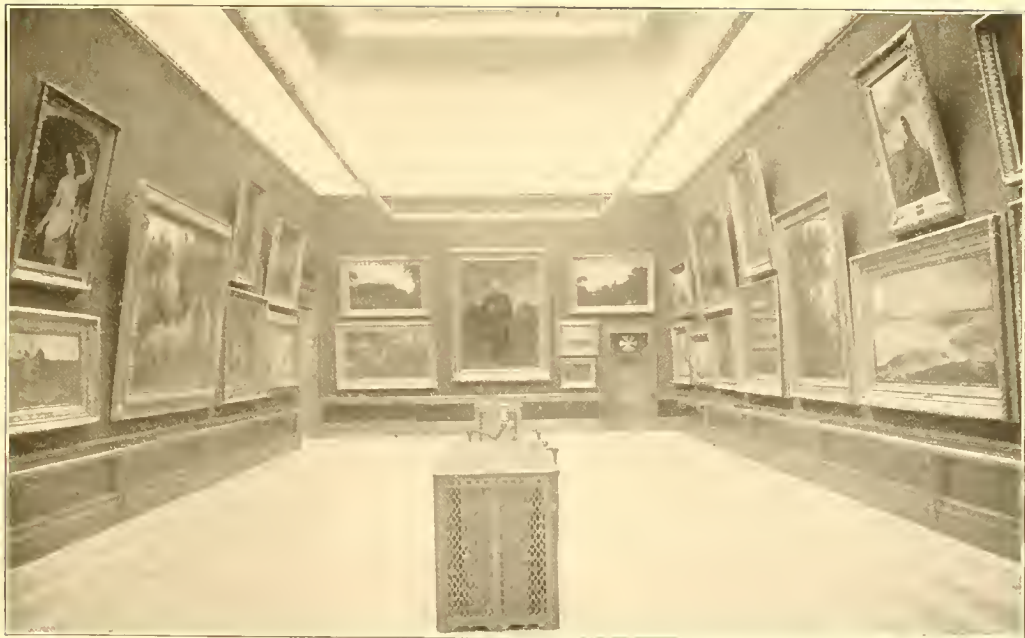
BROAD AVENUES—MAGNIFICENT RESIDENCES



public from itself and its hardly less active enemies have brought forth marvelous results. A vigilant and efficient Health Department has so taken advantage of the broad highways and the natural sanitary conditions as to render the inhabitants proof against any scare of an epidemic. In no other city in the country is there less chance for the spreading abroad of any plague-like affliction.

A common community weakness is boastfulness as to the local climate. Washington does not boast of its climate, but it extracts a great deal of quiet satisfaction from the fact that in the summer it is much cooler than are many cities to the north of it. Southern breezes of which so many centres of population complain during the summer season reach Washington cooled by a thousand miles of intimacy with the Atlantic Ocean and more than two hundred miles of close communion with the Chesapeake and the Potomac. Even when the days are really hot, the sun's heat has not that deadly effectiveness which is common in more northern cities. The local record of sun-strokes and heat prostrations shows almost entire immunity from fatal cases; **Climate** a record which contrasts strongly with that made in the densely inhabited and narrow streets of such cities as New York, for instance. There have been times, too, when Washington has luxuriated in warmth while regions much nearer the equator have





A ROOM IN THE CORCORAN ART GALLERY





shivered in the clasp of the Ice King. There is probably no place in all the eastern portion of the United States where the temperature is more nearly equable than in the District of Columbia. Many invalids come to Washington during the fall and remain until it is time to visit the mountains or the seashore. The fact that Washington is situated in the great fruit-growing belt is proof conclusive as to the mildness of its climate.

As an educational center Washington has many advantages over other American cities. One in every five hundred of its inhabitants is a scientist of more than local repute. Nowhere in all the Western Hemisphere can there be found such a vast amount of educational material. Here is the only place where the study of the government of the great republic is possible. Here is the machinery which accomplishes so much. Here, all the year round, the executive branch puts in operation the plans committed to its keeping by that body which directly represents the people. Years might profitably be spent by students in observing the methods of presidents, cabinet officers, chiefs of bureaus, clerks and even the holders of humbler positions. Here Congress meets and affords ample opportunity for the careful investigator into our legislative methods. Hither come the politicians, the seekers after office, the manipulators of the "pulls," the statesmen without visible means of support, the claimants, the men who hope to be but never are.

Education





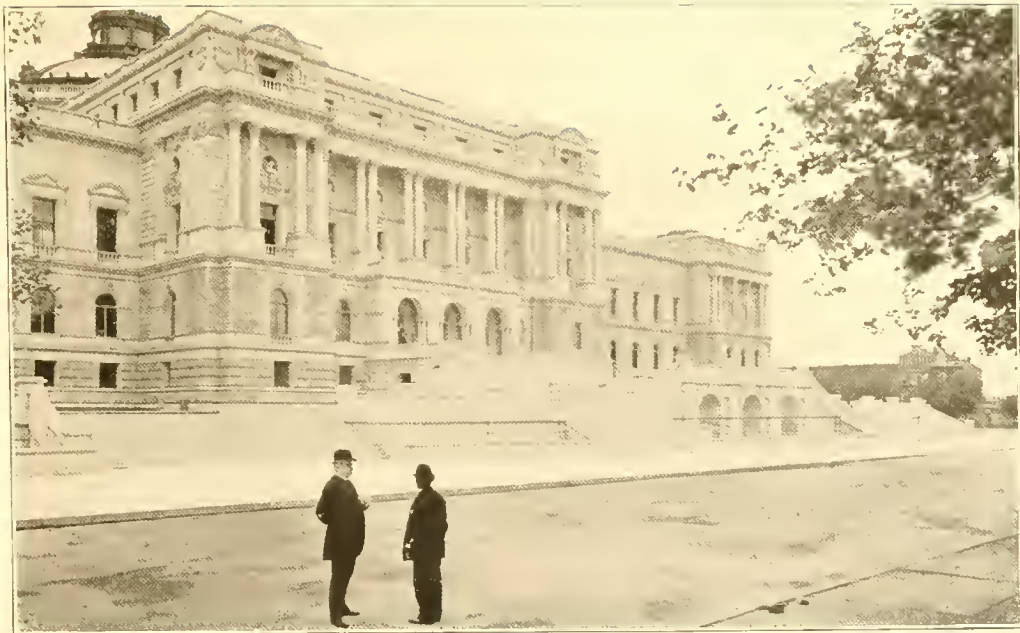
THE COSMOS CLUB



Object lessons, however, are not the only lessons taught in Washington. Here is the great Library of Congress, housed in a magnificent structure the decorations of which are the admiration of the art world; a library that seems now to lack little of comparative completeness. Here are the government departments, each rich in material for study. Here is the Smithsonian Institution and National Museum. Here is the Corcoran Gallery of Art, a great collection splendidly sheltered. Here are universities and colleges and schools in profusion. A public library, only recently established, will soon, it is hoped, be sufficiently developed to supply the literary demands of this more than ordinarily intelligent community. The building in which this library is to have its home promises to be a notable contribution to architectural Washington. The best thought of thoroughly capable minds will find expression in the expenditure of the modest sum of money available for the creation of this much-needed structure.

Quality, good quality, is one of the features of Washington's police force. Physical and mental fitness are striven for and in most instances are secured. Cleanliness and correct deportment are insisted upon. For years Congress has been negligent as to the numerical strength of the organization, but recently there has been conservative increase and there is promise of additional men in the near future. Fortunately the city has never





MAIN ENTRANCE TO CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING





suffered seriously because of the shortage, for Washington is law-abiding. Here and there is individual turbulence, of course, but it is calmness itself when compared with the noisy demonstrations too frequently in evidence in other American cities.

A mob in Washington is almost an impossibility. If, however, one were possible here, it would not be able to work any material injury except to itself. The police force, a brigade of the National Guard, and the garrisons at Fort Myer, Washington Barracks, Fort Washington, Fort Hunt and the Marine Barracks would preserve the city's peace without much difficulty.

Probably no other city in the United States has such a low percentage of fire losses as Washington. An excellent fire department, which can be and is being modernized and improved, assisted by the broad smooth streets, responds Public Safety very rapidly to all alarms and does its work promptly and well. There is no great stream of traffic to be stemmed or diverted; comparatively few overhead wires to interfere with the fire-fighters; no lack of the essential extinguishing fluid.

Washington has strong social tendencies, and these, combined with the refined cosmopolitan character of Washington's population, add largely to the city's attractiveness as a place of residence. Here may be found the best representatives of European, Asiatic





WITHIN THE LIBRARY BUILDING



and American civilization; some of them prominent in the official world, others conspicuous in business affairs, still others intent only on enjoying the fruits of their toil and the remnant of their days.

Official Washington is notable. While Congress is in session there cannot possibly be complaint of dullness. There are banquets at the Executive Mansion; Presidential receptions to the Supreme Court, the Diplomatic Corps, the Houses of Congress, the Army and Navy, and the general public; weekly receptions by members of the Cabinet; Diplomatic Corps "at homes;" dinners galore; all the varieties of teas; theatre parties without number; and a judicious sprinkling of opportunities to be at once fashionable and charitable. Society

It should be understood, however, that Washington society is not wholly official nor is it altogether open to the possessor of any place in the Blue Book. Non-official Washington has a social circle in which may be found many delightful people whose qualities are solid and enduring; the best elements of all social life and worthy representatives of the men and women who have made the city what it is—a Capital of which the Nation is justly proud.





AT ARLINGTON





Two hundred and seventy years ago Henry Fleet, an English fur-trader, explored the Potomac and the adjacent country. Of the territory on which is now the Nation's Capital he wrote: "This place is without question the most healthful and pleasant in all this country and the most convenient for habitation; the air temperate in summer and not violent in winter. The river aboundeth in all manner of fish, and for deer, buffaloes, bears and turkeys, the woods do swarm with them, and the soil is exceedingly fertile." The buffalo (except in the "Zoo") has vanished, of course, and there is scarcity of deer, bear and turkey, but the Potomac and its tributaries yet boast an abundance of fish and the sportsman has many opportunities. Deer and bear and turkey still exist in Virginia; adjacent Virginia and Maryland are rich in small game, while the streams are well stocked with trout and bass.

Athletic exercises here find a comfortable home. It is estimated that fifty thousand bicycles are propelled over the smoothest of streets; sailboats, rowboats, canoes, steam and naphtha launches and yachts disturb the bosom of the Potomac day and night; cricket and croquet have their votaries; the national game is played by professionals and amateurs; gymnasiums are well patronized, while golf numbers its victims by rapidly-increasing hundreds.





ON UPPER FOURTEENTH STREET



Washington is well equipped with places of rational amusement. There are first-class theaters and second-class theaters and even third-class theaters. In the summer time there are continuous trolley excursions to glens and groves and lakes; river excursions many times a day; railroad trips to fresh, brackish or salt water; and gardens devoted mainly to the sale of liquors which in certain seasons of the year are supposed to have cooling properties. **Amusements**

Light manufacturing could not find a more congenial home than in or in the immediate vicinity of the District of Columbia. At this time the enormous water-power of the Potomac is unused, but the day of such extravagant and inexcusable wastefulness is rapidly passing. A company is now planning to convert into electrical force the rushing torrents of the river at Great Falls and to convey that same force into the city for illuminating and propulsive purposes. That breach will probably result in the downfall of the wall which has until now shut out the industrious who have long grieved at their inability to turn to money-making use the hundreds of sites available for the less objectionable varieties of manufactures. There is a big local market for almost any kind of a factory product. Coal is brought directly by canal from **Business Projects**





FARRAGUT IN BRONZE





the mines in the Cumberland district, and there is ample rail and river transportation. Wholesale stores in almost any line could be established with a certainty of profits.

Steam communication with the north, south, east and west is maintained by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, and the Southern Railroad.

Electric roads operate as far south as Alexandria, Virginia, and north to Rockville, Maryland. All the prominent suburbs are electrically connected with the city.

Steamboat service is constant. Three of the finest of river boats are run between Washington and Fortress Monroe, Norfolk, and Newport News. Other good boats run to Mount Vernon, Marshall Hall, River View, Glymont, Chapel Point, Colonial Beach, Piney Point, all the other Potomac landings in Maryland and Virginia, and up the Chesapeake to Baltimore.

For ten years the Washington Board of Trade has engaged in "the consideration of, and action upon, matters concerning the commerce, prosperity, and advancement of the material interests of the National Capital and the dissemination of information relating thereto." Results prove the achievement of gratifying success in the principal work of the Board—the encouragement of public improvements.

**Communication**

**The Board of  
Trade**





METROPOLITAN CLUB



Representatives of the Board have appeared before the proper Congressional Committees in behalf of the plans necessary to the welfare and beautifying of the National Capital and have accomplished very much, Congressmen recognizing their representative character and approving their conservatively liberal ideas.

In all matters of which it takes cognizance the Board is wholly unselfish; its only aim is the betterment of Washington.

Washington's future is assured. The day of doubtings, of fears, and of little things, has departed forever. President Noyes put that very happily when he said: "The ward of the nation will never again be starved and ill-treated by its guardian, once contemptuous, now grown proud and affectionate. In the present partnership of nation and nation's city the former has indorsed the latter's promise to prosper as well as to pay. The swelling prospects of other places that attract men may collapse, mineral deposits may fail, tariff changes may ruin the business of a manufacturing town, fickle commerce may flow in other channels, but the fortunes of the republic and its capital are inseparably interwoven, and, while the states of the Union endure and flourish, Washington as the nation's city will show forth the republic in miniature, responding in its own growth to the national development and prosperity."

**The City's  
Future**





"RETREAT" AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME





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